

Jewish Louisvillians Call for Peace

Hamas's brutal and unconscionable massacre of some 1,200 people—Israelis and members of other nationalities—and its kidnapping of more than 200 others was the worst single act of global terrorism since September 11, 2001. We condemn this attack categorically.

As Jews, we still feel the pain and horror of October 7. As Jews, we fear the rise of antisemitism.

As Jews, we also remember the lessons our rabbis taught us: **Love your neighbor as yourself. All people, not just the Jewish people, are made in God's image. To kill an innocent person is to destroy an entire world.**

As Jews, we cry out that *Palestinians, too, are made in God's image, that each innocent Palestinian life is also an entire world, that Palestinians are just as entitled as Israelis and Americans to freedom and democracy and a chance to make a good life.*

And as Jews, we listen carefully when our *chevrei*, our counterparts, in Israel speak up about their situation. **We therefore declare our solidarity with the coalition of Israeli peace organizations** which, in a [joint Jewish-Arab declaration for peace](#) released on November 6, called upon the Israeli government to immediately cease killing civilians and to pursue peace with justice. "Harming innocents on one side," they wrote, "does not balance the pain of the killing on the other side, it just adds more pain to the immense pain. ... Precisely in these terrible days, the simple truth is clearer than ever: ***the freedom, security, and life of all living in this land depend on each other.***

Further, these Israelis called upon the government to:

1. Strive for a stable cease-fire, within which negotiations for a political agreement will be started immediately based on mutual recognition of the right of the two peoples to self-determination – an agreement that will guarantee security, freedom, and well-being for both peoples;
2. Immediately promote a broad prisoner deal to bring home the hostages;
3. Immediately stop harming innocent civilians. There isn't and cannot be any justification for

3. Immediately stop harming innocent civilians. There isn't and cannot be any justification for harming the innocent;
4. Immediately curb the rampant settler violence in the West Bank with the backing of the army; and
5. Stop the persecution and oppression of Palestinian citizens of Israel and those who express solidarity with the residents of Gaza and oppose the war.

And they conclude:

We have all experienced the rounds of violence. Time and time again it is evident that there is no military solution to this conflict, nor can there ever be one. The only way to stop the bloodshed is a political agreement that will guarantee security, justice and freedom for both nations.

There are no winners in war. Only peace will bring security.

As Jewish Louisvillians, we stand in solidarity with the Israeli peace coalition. Like them—twenty-nine organizations representing Israelis of various backgrounds, persuasions, and political views—we join together to call for ending the bloodshed, for bringing the hostages home, and for finding a way forward to lasting peace, security, and justice.

On the local level, **we call on the Jewish Federation of Louisville to stop implying — and for all community leaders to refrain from suggesting — that the only legitimate Jewish response to 10/7 is one of total and unwavering support for the actions of the Israeli government and military—actions that we believe are not only heinous in themselves but bad for Israel's present and future security and dangerous for Jews worldwide.**

The fact is that Jewish Louisvillians hold diverse perspectives on Israel and its position in our Jewish identity—a diversity far broader than is currently reflected by the Jewish institutions that claim to represent us. We therefore appeal to Jewish institutions to avoid adopting any single position as a matter of orthodoxy, as doing so gives the broader public the false impression that being Jewish entails unquestioning loyalty to the Israeli government, whatever its goals may be. In addition, it risks repelling a generation of younger Jewish Louisvillians who recoil from Israel's actions and consequently find themselves alienated from their own community.

Finally, as Jews in the Diaspora—with widely varying perspectives on and relationships with Israel—we do not presume to know or even agree amongst ourselves about the form that a just and peaceable resolution would take; that is up to the people of Israel and Palestine to forge together. But neither may the State of Israel presume to speak or act or kill for us: **not in our name** may Netanyahu and his war cabinet continue this catastrophe.

די למלחמה, די לכיבוש

צדק, צדק תרדוף

No more war, no more occupation.

Justice, Justice shall you pursue

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Robyn Jamner
Ben Bass
Nathan Bird
Abby Kamen
Samantha Kamen
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